REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application as amended. Claims 1, 10-11, 14, 21-23, 33, 35, and 40 have been amended. Claims 12, 13, 18, 19, 20, and 30 have previously been cancelled without prejudice. New claims 42-59 have been added. Therefore, claims 1-11, 14-17, 21-29, and 31-59 are now are presented for examination.

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejection

Claims 1-8, 14-17, 21-29, 31-32 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e), as being anticipated by Epinions.com ("Epinions").

Epinions discloses allowing consumers "to write about products [they] love or hate . . . [and they] get to *rate the usefulness of anyone's opinion*" (page 2; emphasis provided). Epinions further discloses "[b]uilding [a] Web of Trust" by "*rat[ing] reviews*" and, as acknowledged by the Examiner, "the particular user's *rating of other users' review* and the other *users' reviews of the particular user's ratings*" (pages 5 and 9-10; Office Action, mailed Nov. 19, 2003, page 18; emphasis provided).

Epinions further discloses "[i]f you *find opinions of certain members valuable, you may choose to trust them* . . . so you'll see trusted member opinions first . . . [and if] you specify that you trust a member, you tap into his or her Web of Trust" (page 23). At best, Epinions discloses "a 'web' of people of *who trust each other*" by trusting each other's reviews or opinions (page 24).

Claim 1, in pertinent part, recites "deriving a community rating uniquely corresponding to a particular user by utilizing an <u>aggregation the one or more characteristic values associated with the particular user and the one or more characteristic</u>

values associated with each user of the plurality of users sponsored to the online trading community by the particular user" (emphasis provided).

For example, the "rating is derived for a particular user of the electronic community based on a characteristic value associated with the particular user and the characteristic values associated with users related to the particular user" (Specification, page 4; emphasis provided; see also claim 1). For example, if A is the particular user and A has introduced users B and C to the electronic trading community, the community rating is based on the aggregation of the characteristic values of A and the characteristic values of B and C, who were sponsored to the trading community by A.

Stated differently, as recited by claim 1, the community rating includes utilizing the aggregation of the characteristic values of the particular user and the characteristic values of the users brought to the online trading community by the particular user. This is not the same as Epinions' web of people who *trust each other*. Using the above example of users A, B, and C, at best, Epinions discloses a *web of users A, B, and C who trust each other*. Epinions does not teach or reasonably suggest aggregating the one or more characteristic values associated with the particular user and the one or more characteristic values associated with each user of the plurality of users sponsored to the online trading community by the particular user, as recited by claim 1.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims.

With regard to claims 14, 22 and 28, the claims contain limitations similar to those of claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 14, 22 and 28 and their dependent claims.

New Claims

New claim 42, in pertinent part, recites "one or more characteristic values associated with <u>each user sponsored to the online trading community by each sponsored user of the particular user</u>, and a <u>number of users sponsored to the online community by the particular user</u>." Adding to the discussion above with respect to claim 1, the community rating is further based on the characteristic values of users sponsored by the sponsors of the particular user and the number of users sponsored by the particular user. Using the example above, the if B sponsors D and E, the community rating of the particular user A would be based one or more of the following: the characteristic value associated with A, the characteristic value associated with B and C (sponsored by A), the characteristic value associated with D and E (sponsored by B), and the number of users sponsored by A, which is 2 (B and C).

<u>Epinions</u> does not teach or reasonably suggest using one or more characteristic values associated with <u>each user sponsored to the online trading community by each sponsored user of the particular user</u>, and a <u>number of users sponsored to the online community by the particular user</u>, as recited by claim 1.

Accordingly, for at least the reasons set forth above, claims 42-59 are allowable over Epinions.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection

Claims 11 and 33-39 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Epinions.

Claims 9-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Epinions in view of Aho et al., Data Structures and Algorithms ("Aho").

With regard to claim 33, the claim contains limitations similar to those of claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claim 33 and its dependent claims.

Claims 9-11 depend from independent claim 1 and thus include the limitations of claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 9-11.

Conclusion

In light of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of the claims is hereby earnestly requested.

Invitation for a Telephone Interview

The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at (303) 740-1980 if there remains any issue with allowance of the case.

Request for an Extension of Time

Applicants respectfully petition for an extension of time to respond should one be necessary. Please charge our Deposit Account No. 02-2666 to cover the necessary fee under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(a) for such an extension.
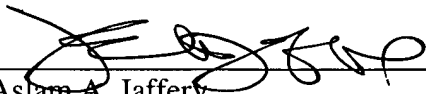
Charge our Deposit Account

Please charge any shortage to our Deposit Account No. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,

BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR & ZAFMAN LLP

Date: 9/16/04

Aslam A. Jaffery
Reg. No. 51,841

12400 Wilshire Boulevard
7th Floor
Los Angeles, California 90025-1030
(303) 740-1980